**Technology**

**Toolbox**

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Technology Toolbox Critique

Critique Summary

I chose to critique the tools I explore on: user friendly, cost, safe and secure, and relevance. A tool that is user friendly is a tool that is easy to use and not a lot of extra help is needed. When critiquing the cost, I looked at whether or not there was a fee or any charge after a certain time period. A safe and secure tool is a tool that students would be able to use independently. I checked if a password was needed to use the tool. Lastly, I critiqued the relevance of the tool. I critiqued how useful the tool would be in the classroom and for personal use.

**Technology Toolbox Criteria**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| User friendly | **5 4 3 2 1**  **Very easy Difficult** | How easy is this tool to use? Would someone who is not computer savvy be able to use this tool? |
| Cost | **5 4 3 2 1**  **Free! Expensive** | Is this tool free? Is it ad driven? |
| Safe and Secure | **5 4 3 2 1**  **Secure** **Unsafe** | Does this tool have a password? |
| Relevance | **5 4 3 2 1**  **Will use Not useful** | Would you use this tool in your classroom? Could this tool be used for personal use? |

**Aggregators: Google Reader**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 4 | This was very easy to use. I was able to log in using my gmail account. Google reader allows you to see what blogs you are following and easy to find what you are looking for. |
| Cost | 5 | This application is free! |
| Safe and Secure | 5 | Password protected (my gmail password and log in was used ) |
| Relevance | 4 | I would use this tool for personal use but I do not think it would be that useful in the classroom. |

**Social Bookmarking: Blinklist**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 4 | This application had a step by step process in starting my account. This made it easy for me to begin "Blinking." |
| Cost | 5 | Another Free application! |
| Safe and Secure | 5 | Password Protected. I did have to sign up for a new account in order to set up a password. |
| Relevance | 4 | I think this application would be helpful to high school students who were researching or studying a topic. I found it useful that it would keep all of your links in one place and show you links that other people found helpful. |

**Internet Search Tools: Squidoo**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 5 | Easy to use! On the homepage everything is set up by category. Very welcoming and did not make me feel overwhelmed at all. Simple. |
| Cost | 5 | FREE |
| Safe and Secure | 5 | A personal account and password is needed. |
| Relevance | 4 | I think this tool would be useful for personal use as well as in the classroom. Also has an RSS link! |

**Webstart: Protopage**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 4 | Easy to use once you play around with it for a bit. Disappointed that you are not able to upload things that are not in the form of a widget. Although, there are a wide range of widgets to choose from. |
| Cost | 5 | FREE! |
| Safe and Secure | 5 | Password and account protected |
| Relevance | 4 | I think that you could use this for a classroom website or personal website. It would also be a great way to introduce students to making their own webpage's. |

**Weblogs: Blogger**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 5 | Easy to operate. I was able to log in with my gmail account. It was also easy to find other peoples blogs. |
| Cost | 5 | Free |
| Safe and Secure | 5 | Password protected. Used my gmail account. |
| Relevance | 5 | I think this would be a great application to have students blog about what they are doing in school (Science, English, etc.) I would also use this as a personal blog. |

**WikiSpaces**

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| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 4 | Simple to use. A little hard to upload documents into the pages. Make sure to save any changes put on a new page or you will not see the changes made. |
| Cost | 5 | Free. (can pay for extended version) |
| Safe and Secure | 5 | Password and username protected. Wikispaces can be made open to the public or private depending on the preference of the user. |
| Relevance | 5 | Great for in the classroom. I have used it in 2 of my classes and it was helpful. I can also see why people would use a wikispace for personal use. |

**Web-based word processing: Google Docs.**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 5 | So awesome! You are able to share documents, spreadsheets, pictures, and much more. |
| Cost | 5 | Free |
| Safe and Secure | 5 | Password Protected. Was able to use my google account to log in. |
| Relevance | 5 | I would use this in the classroom and for persnal use. What a great idea for sharing work. I would use this tool for group project in my classroom. |

**Web-based spreadsheets & Databases: Num Sum**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 3 | Internet explorer and Firefox are suggested browsers. The site warns that other browsers may not work. I did not find this tool as easy to use as the others-this may be in part to my lack of confidence in using excel. |
| Cost | 5 | Free |
| Safe and Secure | 4 | Password and account protected |
| Relevance | 3 | I think this tool would helpful in the business world or maybe even a school PTSA but I do not think I would use this in the classroom. This may be helpful to someone who owned their own business or tracking their bills. |

**Creative Writing: FanFiction**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 3 | It took me four times to successfully make an account. The account verification "mystery" letters were hard to read. This tool was became easier to use once I was able to start an account. |
| Cost | 5 | Free |
| Safe and Secure | 5 | Account and password protected. They send an email to your account to verify it is a correct email address. |
| Relevance | 4 | I think this tool would be helpful in an English class to help give students ideas. The teacher can also filter the account and see what students are writing. |

**Assessment Tools: Survey Monkey**

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| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 5 | Very easy to use. Step by step instructions. I thought the analyze results tab was interesting. |
| Cost | 4 | Basic version is free. Premium plans range from $16.99-$64.99 a month. The free version allows you to make up to 10 questions for free. |
| Safe and Secure | 4 | An account and password are needed to access this tool. |
| Relevance | 5 | Good tool to use in the classroom if computers are available. I think you could use this for assessment on group work or independent projects. Students could also make up their own surveys. (formative and summative) |

**Podcasting: Audacity**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 4 | Step by step directions made it an easy process to maneuver through the site. This tool has a tab where you can link the sounds directly to your wikispace. Tutorials with specific questions and directions are readily available. |
| Cost | 5 | Free |
| Safe and Secure | 3 | No password involved. Could be secure if you link it to a private wiki page or website. |
| Relevance | 5 | I would use this in my classroom to help absent students. Record a lesson for the day and link it to the classroom wikispace-then absent students can listen at home. |

**Screencasting: CamStudio**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| User Friendly | 3 | A little confusing on how to export the video although the help tab was useful. Lots of fun tools- ie. voice changing. |
| Cost | 5 | Free |
| Safe and Secure | 3 | No password..depending on where you post the video it can be secure. |
| Relevance | 5 | Very useful for the classroom and personal use. Reminds me of skype but not a live video. |